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Written Testimony submitted by

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On behalf of the membership of Conn-NAHRO

Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable housing.

Co-Chairmen Leone and Hennessy and members of the Committee on Veteran's Affairs

My name is Jeffrey Arn, I am the current, Vice President of Housing and Legislation for Conn-NAHRO, I am the Executive Director of the Vernon Housing Authority and I also serve as a Commissioner for the Coventry Housing Authority. **I am writing in opposition of Raised Bill S.B. No. 312 'An Act Providing Veterans' Preferences in the Rental Assistance Program and Housing Authority Projects'.**

One can easily understand the motivation behind a preference for individuals who have served out country with honor and distinction. However, the need for veterans to have affordable housing is not one that is simply addressed with a preference. The state-aided housing stock, which is roughly 17,600, is actually a mix of large family developments and housing for elderly and disabled. A broad stroke preference has the potential for unintended consequences to many veterans. The definition of veteran invoked for SB 312 is very broad and already covers many residents of state-aided housing. The definition is so broad that there is a concern about mixing elderly populations with certain aspects of disabled veteran population who have substantial supportive housing needs.

We ask that the committee consider making the veteran's preference permissive rather than mandatory in the statute and allow each housing authority to adopt the preference on a program by program basis. We believe that each housing authority board understands the purpose of the preference and the sacrifice and value that a veteran that is income eligible for state-aided has on a fundamental basis.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.